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Message Text

SECRET

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53
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
---------- 126270
R 221425Z DEC 75
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3181

S E C R E T JIDDA 8414

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, ETEL, SA
SUBJECT: SAUDI INTEREST IN USG ASSISTANCE FOR RADIO BROADCASTING

REF: A) JIDDA 4492
B) STATE 145358
C) JIDDA 3185

1. THE QUESTION OF USG ASSISTANCE TO SAUDI PUBLIC RADIO BROADCASTING HAS REEMERGED, THIS TIME IN THE FORUM OF THE JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION. MR. SWELEM, DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR TECHNOLOGY OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION TOLD A MEMBER OF USREP/JECOR THAT THE SAG HAD HAD A STUDY MADE BY THE FIRM OF KERSHNER AND WRIGHT, INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT ELECTRONIC ENGINEERS, SPRINGFIELD, VIRGINIA. THE FIRM'S REPORT TO THE SAG WAS DATED JUNE 10, 1974. SWELEM REQUESTED USG ASSISTANCE THROUGH JOINT COMMISSION CHANNELS TO PROVIDE A REVIEW OF THE KERSHNER AND WRIGHT REPORT. THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SHOULD INCLUDE ADVICE TO THE SAG ON: (1) ESTAGLISHING A NORMAL BROADCAST CAPABILITY FOR THE JIDDA STATION WITH A COUNTER CLANDESTINE BROADCAST CAPABILITY WHEN REQUIRED FOR SHORT PERIODS OF TIME; AND (2) ESTABLISHING A COUNTER CLANDESTINE BROADCAST CAPABILITY FOR THE ENTIRE SYSTEM.

2. WE RECOMMEND THAT WE TAKE A POSITIVE BUT QUALIFIED POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THIS REQUEST: WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO ASSIST THE SAG IN EVALUATING THE KERSHNER AND
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WRIGHT REPORT AS IT RELATES TO BROADCASTING OF RADIO

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PROGRAMS, BUT THAT WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO SEE THE JOINT COMMISSION INVOLVED IN EVALUATING PROPOSALS FOR "COUNTER-BROADCASTING" OR JAMMING.

3. WE WOULD GIVE TWO MAIN REASONS FOR THE SECOND PART OF THE DECISION:
A) THE USG WILL NOT ARGUE THE SOVEREIGN RIGHT OF A COUNTRY TO TRY TO JAM FOREIGN BROADCASTS, BUT WE DO NOT THINK IT IS A GOOD IDEA: IT IS ENORMOUSLY EXPENSIVE AND EVEN THEN NOT VERY EFFECTIVE. IT CAN ALSO HAVE A POLITICALLY NEGATIVE EFFECT EQUAL TO THAT WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY THE OFFENDING BROADCASTS, AND
B) THE US PUBLIC AND THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES HAVE A VERY NEGATIVE VIEW OF JAMMING, ASSOCIATING IT WITH THE PRACTICS FOLLOWED BY THE USSR AND OTHER COMMUNIST STATES TO KEEP THEIR PEOPLE IN IGNORANT SUBJUGATION. THEY WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY A COUNTRY OF THE FREE WORLD WOULD WISH TO ENGAGE IN THE PRACTICE. THEY WOULD CERTAINLY NOT APPRECIATE THE JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION'S BEING INVOLVED IN THIS KIND OF ACTIVITY AND WOULD HAVE A DISTORTED VIEW OF WHAT THE COMMISSION IS DESIGNED TO ACCOMPLISH. IT WOULD BE GIVING AMMUNITION TO THOSE WHO ARE OPPOSED TO CLOSE SAUDI-US COOPERATION AND WISH TO SEE THE JOINT COMMISSION FAIL.

4. THE POINTS MADE IN PARAGRAPH THREE WOULD BE MADE AT AN APPROPRIATLY HIGH LEVEL IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND EMBODIED IN AN AIDE MEMOIRE. THE SAME POINTS WOULD BE MADE IN ANY OTHER FORUM WHERE THE ISSUE WAS RAISED.
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Draft Date: 22 DEC 1975
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